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RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 3243

RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY 2574

RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 3058

RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY 1002

RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY 0240

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0331

RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 0750

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DAR ES SALAAM 001154

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LONDON, PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/15/2017

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM ZI TZ

SUBJECT: TANZANIA: MFA DIRECTOR OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS

DISCUSSES SADC SUMMIT ON ZIMBABWE, FNL WITHDRAWAL FROM

BURUNDI PEACE PROCESS

REF: STATE 109638

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission, D. Purnell Delly
for reasons 1.4(b,d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) The Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs African Division, Ambassador Francis Malambugi, told the DCM August 14 that SADC leaders await President Mbeki's report on his facilitation efforts between the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) and Zimbabwe's opposition parties during the upcoming summit in Lusaka, Zambia. In Tanzania's view, as the humanitarian plight of the people of Zimbabwe continues to worsen, "it is not productive for any country to isolate Zimbabwe." He indicated that Mbeki's report may show that progress has been slower than hoped for, but suggested we should wait and see what the August 16-17 meeting reveals; he offered to give us an out-brief immediately after the summit concludes.

¶2. (C) Turning to Burundi, Malambugi said the Government of Tanzania (GOT) was certainly concerned when the FNL withdrew from the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM) on July 21, yet "heartened" that from that date until now, they have not broken the ceasefire. He said South Africa's Minister for Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula, is the lead negotiator and met with the rebel leaders on August 11-12 to listen to the FNL leaders' reasons for withdrawing. Minister Nqakula came to brief President Kikwete in Dar es Salaam on August 13. Malambugi emphasized the GOT remains concerned that the Burundian refugee camps in western Tanzanian are being fingered as a haven for rebel fighters and thus will continue to push for all Burundian refugees to return home as soon as possible. End Summary.

SADC Summit on Zimbabwe

¶3. (C) Ambassador Malambugi confided all the SADC leaders are disturbed that the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe continues to worsen. However, trying to isolate President Mugabe would only cause him to further "dig in," based on his freedom fighter mentality and legacy. Malambugi believed

that despite the dire economic situation in Zimbabwe, Mugabe gains support when the EU, United States or others impose sanctions or try to "push toward an end game." The DCM replied that the U.S. believed that Zimbabwe was an issue for Africa to address, and that SADC was the appropriate vehicle to do so. At the same time, disastrous economic policies, not sanctions, were the cause of suffering, and that the only "end game" the U.S. desires is creation of free and open political space in Zimbabwe, and a return of prosperity.

¶4. (C) The DCM asked the GOT's view on the SADC leaders' goal during the upcoming Lusaka meeting to advance the plan of action initiated in Dar es Salaam at the March 2007 SADC summit. Malambugi would not predict an outcome, only noting at the March SADC summit, the heads of state had entrusted President Mbeki to get the political dialogue between the GOZ and opposition on track. Only after Mbeki gives his report in Lusaka will the leaders consider and decide on next steps. Malambugi admitted progress on the political dialogue has been slow and perhaps frustrating for Mbeki, but stressed that Tanzania has faced many frustrations in trying to find a lasting peace in Burundi, yet "we continue to try." He added that Tanzania has learned that regional leverage can play an important role. Thus, for the SADC leaders to give up on efforts to influence Mugabe is "not an option," no matter how long or frustrating the road to resolving the crisis in Zimbabwe might be.

Burundi: Concern Yet Cautious Optimism

¶5. (C) In response to the DCM's query on the GOT's reaction to the FNL withdrawing from the JVMM, Ambassador Malambugi said the JVMM is the arena for dialogue. In his view, that

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body is impartial and able to deal with all issues or complaints, even complaints against the facilitators. Malambugi acknowledged that without the FNL in the mechanism, the peace process in Burundi will slow down. Yet, he was mildly optimistic noting the fact that the FNL has continued to maintain the cease fire, might indicate they could be persuaded to return to the JVMM. He said he had escorted the South African Minister Nqakula during his stopover in Dar es Salaam August 13 to brief President Kikwete. Kikwete knows that in order for the peace agreement signed in Dar es Salaam on September 7, 2006 to be fully implemented, the FNL needs to be in the JVMM. The GOT has promised to use all its influence to support efforts to bring the FNL back into the process.

¶6. (SBU) Malambugi said he could not confirm reports that the FNL members have gone to remote areas to regroup and possibly rearm. "We do not know," Malambugi claimed. He noted that Tanzania fully endorsed and supports the AU Peace and Security Committee's August 10 statement expressing concern at the FNL's action and calling for them to rejoin the JVMM. In response to the DCM's query on the next steps Minister Nqakula plans to take, Malambugi said the GOT does not know in detail, but there is regional agreement that each country support the South African envoy's efforts and do all possible to bring the rebel FNL back into the JVMM.

Burundian refugee camps used as "scapegoat"

¶7. (C) Malambugi stressed that with several Burundian refugee camps still open in western Tanzania, fingers are often pointed that Tanzania may be "harboring rebels or traitors" in these camps. Thus in the GOT's view, the refugees should all return to Burundi as soon as possible, to avoid the camps' existence being used as a "scapegoat" for problems with rebel groups. Malambugi said the rate of refugee returns has not yet dropped in the wake of the FNL's withdrawal on July 21. However, it is important for the FNL to quickly rejoin the JVMM, so that confidence in the safety and security situation in Burundi remains high, and does not deter any refugees from returning.

Comment

18. (SBU) Ambassador Malambugi, appointed by President Kikwete a few months ago to head up the African Division of MFA, spoke frankly that both influencing Mugabe to take needed steps to resolve the economic and political deterioration in Zimbabwe and reaching a final resolution to the peace process in Burundi, are thorny issues that will take patience and perseverance. He commented that particularly in the case of President Mugabe: "Who can ever know his real mind?"

However, Malambugi assured the DCM that we will get a full briefing immediately following the SADC summit and updates as needed on progress in the Burundi peace process.

RETZER